

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2009

The Honorable Richard L. Skinner
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Skinner:

Recent media reports in Chicago raise serious questions about how federal grant money is being spent in Cook County. These reports indicate a pattern of misuse and mismanagement that warrant a full investigation by your office.

On June 26, 2008, Fox television in Chicago reported that Cook County Board President Todd Stroger purchased a new SUV and was using federal Homeland Security money to outfit the vehicle with emergency communications equipment and computers. The report also notes that a spokesman for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency says that this money is intended solely for emergency responders, and should not be used for executive transport.

On October 30, 2008, NBC television reported that federal officials are investigating how \$43 million for "Project Shield," an ambitious video surveillance program, was spent. Three days later, CBS television reported that their investigation into Project Shield found "bankrupt companies, phony addresses, and falsified documents—not the words you want to hear when talking about terrorism and your tax dollars." The report also alleges that money was directed to certain businesses with political connections to Board President Stroger, even though there was difficulty finding any actual work for these subcontractors to perform. Yesterday, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that "Project Shield" remains over-budget and at least three years late.

The arrest and impeachment of former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich highlights the level of public corruption in Illinois, and we believe your office should conduct a complete investigation of these reports to ensure that the interests of the taxpayer are protected. We have enclosed copies of the reports for your reference.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Steven Kirk
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress